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Introduction

One of the most sought after human traits in our modern society is, of course, the booty. We can't go a day without hearing some form of homage to the holy backside in mainstream media. Why do we have this instinctual attraction to the booty?

Proper engagement of our backsides is mandatory for functional movement to occur. Perhaps we subconsciously recognize that a strong back-side is a pertinent



indication of the over-all health of the human structure. The gluteal muscles are comprised of three bellies called minimus, medius and maximus. Their harmony in movement is crucial to sustain health and integrity into old age.

When the muscles of the hip girdle are not firing properly, joint imbalance is inevitable. This causes improper knee tracking which will lead to pain, injury and loss of potential power. The glutes are a key to spinal and pelvic support. It is important to maintain upright posture and it becomes especially invaluable when your body is under load, such as when performing a dead-lift or picking up a heavy bag of groceries. Unfortunately, today's society may lead to such excessive time spent sitting that it undermines structural health.

One reason we've evolved to be walking the planet today is our body's ability to hunt, gather, and build shelter with our hands and butts. Only since the agricultural, and more recently the digital revolution, has the species had the

opportunity to sit on our bums all day and still put food on the table. This has done wonders for our cognitive development, but is destroying us physically. If one hopes to reduce the likelihood of joint pain and injury, it is important to start moving those glutes! Not to mention, flat butts are just not sexy. This guide will teach you the top ten exercises to reawaken your back-side. These exercises will help restore movement function, which in turn, forms the “perfect butt”. Whether you care about safely picking up a heavy bag of soil in your garden or simply creating a bootylicious backside, these exercises will absolutely get you there!

These exercises are built for both men and women. The intensity and number of reps performed will determine the impact on your body. Higher repetitions of any movement will lead to a more lean body. Conversely, higher weight and lower repetitions will generally build more size. Keep this in mind when you're practicing movement so you can model your exercise based upon your ideal form.



1)Dead-Lift

The dead-lift is one of the most valuable exercises every person should include as part their workout. This is because a crucial part of being human is the ability to pick something up without risk of injury. Practice does not make perfect - *perfect practice* makes perfect. This is a critical distinction. If one utilizes inefficient lifting techniques, then that individual is absolutely setting themselves up for injury later in life.

First, it is important to thin about compound movements. No more isolating individual groups of muscles by compartmentalizing our tissues and turning us into clunky movers. The whole is vastly greater than the sum of its parts. We need to integrate the whole body while we are exercising or we are missing the whole point of practicing movement.

When performing the dead-lift, it is important to follow these basic pointers:

- Keep feet neutral (facing forward)
- Keep shins vertical or perpendicular with the ground
- Rotate knees outward and squeeze your butt tight
- Keep spine long and neutral (never curl spine over to pick up weight!)
- Hinge at the hips and lift with the hips (not the back)
- Latch thumbs around fingers when grabbing the bar



2)Olympic Front Squat

Squats are absolutely mandatory if we still want to maintain the strongest and most functional hips when we're 100 years old (or 40 for that matter). The front squat is one of the best ways to make sure we are maintaining integrity in our mid-section during this movement. To activate the glutes entirely, we need to squat during our full range of motion. That means, start taking weight off the bar and get your butt down to the ground. This will develop your booty as well as significantly increasing your vertical leap.

- Neutral feet
- Knees rotating outward
- Butt squeezed tight
- Neutral spine
- Bar resting on front of shoulders with hands rolled back keeping bar in place
- Keep lower back slightly arched during the whole range of motion



3)Box Jumps

The butt is a prime mover in getting us vertical. Jumping develops fast twitch muscle fibers, which happen to be the larger of the fibers adding to your acquisition of “junk in the trunk”. The key to jumping is to reinforce patterns that will optimize performance and simultaneously be therapeutic for your whole body. It is important to start slowly, then perfect the individual steps in order to increase speed leading to greater results than you could imagine.

- Neutral feet (facing forward) about shoulder width apart
- Knees rotate outward
- Long neutral spine
- Squeeze your butt
- As you squat in position to start jump, rotate your hands inward in order to take slack out of joint (think compression in your whole body)
- Get angry and blow your air out as you EXPLODE up
- Arms begin to rotate outward as your jumping
- land on the box or ground with neutral feet, knees wide and long neutral spine

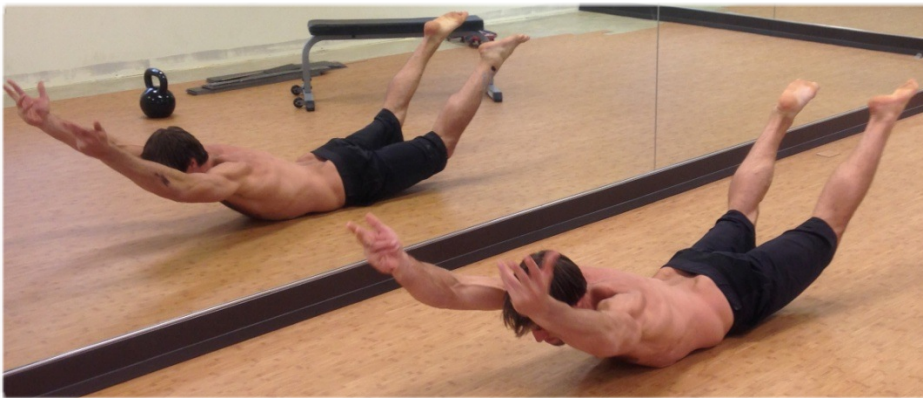


4)Sky Divers

Throughout the day our lifestyle chronically rolls our body forward and disengages our back-sides. Sky Divers are a valuable daily practice and could be done multiple times a day to reverse the effects of sitting. Remember to arc your whole body and not just hinge at your low back. Explore the fullest range of motion of your shoulders and hips while performing this technique. You will see results including an increased range of motion and support and feel more up-right when standing if this exercise is performed on a regular basis.

- Lay on your belly
- Squeeze your butt as tight as you can
- Reach arms and legs straight out
- Think about engaging every muscle on your back-side

- Point thumbs to ceiling
- Point your toes
- Don't crunch your neck (think length)
- Alternate between reaching straight and out to the side with both arms and legs
- Hold contraction for 15 seconds and take a 2 second break for 4 sets.
Total of 1 minute



5)Hanging Back/Glute Extension

The Hanging Back / Glute Extension is a highly under-utilized exercise, but should be implemented at least as often as its counter motion; the leg raise. How easily we forget to balance our movement front to back. This will surely develop a toned and functional booty. It is also a fantastic exercise to develop your body for hand stands and more complex movements. The butt is like a bridge from the lower to the upper body. By reinforcing this bridge we are able to move information regarding movement more efficiently. If we want to be effective movers, we need to start focusing more on developing the bridge and less about packing muscle on to our appendages.

- Lay facing down on a bench
- Allow as much of your lower body to hang off the bench as comfortable
- Grab under the bench and keep your chest pressed into it
- Reach your legs long and point the toes
- Extend legs up toward ceiling as high as you can keeping legs straight
- hold legs at high position and pulse up and down for 10 repetitions

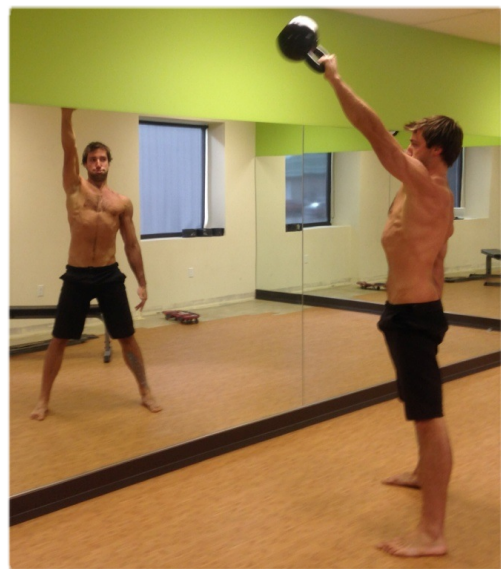


6)Kettlebell Swings

Kettlebells are one of the most phenomenal tools to develop the whole posterior chain of musculature (back of body). There is a lot that goes into swinging and it can become quite addictive due to effectiveness in a very brief amount of time. For this reason we will be only break down the front swing, but I would suggest going deeper into swinging kettlebells for anyone serious about getting functional results fast. Kettleballs are great because they teach your body to explode, relax and reengage thus catching a compound movement crossing multiple joints. A good athlete is not just a powerful muscle contractor, but one who can relax and reengage at very high speed as well.

- Start in the same set up as the dead-lift except now you're holding a kettlebell with one hand between your legs

- Lift the weight slightly off the ground while keeping a long neutral spine, neutral feet and knees rotated outward
- Keep shoulder girdle engaged back so your shoulder blade is hugging your ribs
- Squeeze your butt and explode forward with your hips swinging the weight straight in front of you
- Keep your arm straight
- Allow the kettlebell to drop back between your legs and use your hips for shock absorption
- Absolutely do not allow your back to curve forward at any point



7)Bird Dogs

This technique is great for core stabilization and engagement of your back-side. The key to this movement is to maintain static support and strength through your midsection as you reach your arm and leg up to ceiling as high as possible. You have the option to make circles or any shape you like with your hands and feet as you're reaching toward them.

- Start in a table top position
- Engage the butt
- Long neutral spine
- Reach left leg straight backward as high as possible first
- Then if you can stabilize, reach your right arm as high as possible
- Option to make large circles with your arm and leg at same time
- Maintain a stacked midsection and squeeze the butt tight as you reach



8)Single Leg Bridges

This is a common movement in jiu-jitsu and yoga. It is also a great way to reverse the havoc that chairs are having on our back-sides. The key is to squeeze the muscles on the back of your body as tightly as possible. This begins the conversation with your brain to your body, which in turn leaves you with a more sophisticated movement system and a badonkadonk to boot. If you are comfortable with a wheel in yoga, that would be a great option as well. This is an easier and more butt intensive exercise. The wheel is a bit more advanced. If you have a pillow for your neck handy; use it to keep from crunching up your spine.

- Start laying on back knees up and feet as close your butt as possible
- Squeeze the butt tight
- Feet face straight
- Hands on your chest
- Bridge your hips up toward ceiling as high as possible
- Maintain a neutral spine
- If you have the balance, raise one leg and point toes up toward ceiling
- Option to outline ABC's with your pointed foot to make more challenging
- Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 12 reps on each side



9) Plyometric Lunges

Lunges are great for activating the muscles both front to back of the hips and with isolating any weakness in an individual leg. They also happen to be phenomenal for simultaneously stretching and activating the hips. Let's start to think more about active stretching and mobilizing of joints rather than forcing yourself to have the infinite flexibility of a Gumby doll. By exploring the full range of joint motion found in compound exercises, you are feeding two birds with one hand. You are both lengthening tissue and developing integrity in the structure with just one movement.

- Start with the right foot in front of you about 3 or so feet in front of the left
- Both feet facing forward
- Imagine you have a bucket of water balancing on your head and you don't want to spill!
- Long neutral spine
- Squeeze the butt tight
- Lower down into the bottom position and make sure your shin stays vertical
- Never allow the knee to pass in front of the toes
- Keep the knees rotated out wide
- Explode up and kick both feet as high as you can
- Land the same way you started
- Repeat 12 reps on each side as fast as you can with control



10)Sprinting

If you want some booty inspiration, check out sprinters. The high amplitude training will lead to packing on larger muscle that is built to go hard for a shorter amount of time. Endurance running is helpful for developing a leaner bum. I suggest what I call “intentional running” which is simply paying attention to the quality of every step and once you’re too tired to make every step be a brilliant leap; it’s time to stop.

- Drive with your hips and feel your glutes firing on each step
- Do not heel strike!
- Land the front of the foot and push off with the big toe
- Long neutral spine

- Spread finger tips wide
- Try really hard!



Conclusion

Don't be tricked by the mindless machines that are wasting valuable space at the gym. We are beautifully complex systems which thrive on challenge and adaptation. Stop leg pressing on a machine and start squatting the way our body was designed. If we are not stabilizing as we train, we are dumbing down this brilliant machine. Thanks for reading and keep trying hard!

About the Author



Aaron Alexander is a nationally certified personal trainer and world class movement coach with over a decade of clinical experience. He regularly works with Olympic and professional level athletes to achieve optimal performance. Aaron is also a certified Rolfer® and licensed massage therapist. He teaches structural bodywork internationally

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